SOME

ACCOUNT

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

Dr *EDMUND GIBSON*,

Late Lord Biſhop of *London*.

(Price Six-Pence.)

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BRITISH MUSEUM

240.

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Dr *EDMUND GIBSON*, K

Late Lord Bishop of *London*.

By. Smalbroke - B.P. of Oxford

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ACCOUNT, &c.

IT may reaſonably be expected by the World, that ſome Memorial ſhould be laid before the Publick of ſo great a Prelate, and that made ſo eminent and diſtinguiſhing a Figure in our Church and State, as the late Biſhop of *London* did in a long Courſe of Years. That therefore Juſtice may in ſome Meaſure be done to his Character, and ſo inſtructive an Example may the more effectually excite the World to an Imitation of his Virtues, I think it by no means improper to lay the following Obſervations on his Life and Conduct, however imperfect they may be, before the coming Age; and that both with Regard to his Learned Labours, and his Active or Paſtoral Life; and more particularly his Services of Religion and the Church of *England*.

1. In the firſt Place, it is very remarkable how early in Life Mr *Edmund Gibſon* appeared in the learned World, and how proportionable a Progreſs he made in the Publication of ſeveral ingenious as well as uſeful Books, that required an uncommon Diligence and a ſuperiour

Skill and Knowledge. As the first Instance of which, though comparatively of less Importance, I cannot omit to take Notice of his new Edition of *W. Drummond*'s *Polemo-Middinia*, and *James* the Fifth's *Cantilena Rustica*, with *Notes* by E. G. *i.e. Edmund Gibson*, at *Oxford*, in 1691, in thin 4*to*. A Juvenile Excursion indeed, but suited to his Standing, as he seems to have been at that time an Under-Graduate. This is only intimated here to shew his early Application to the *Northern* Languages, a considerable Knowledge of which appears in his *Notes* on those ingenious Performances; as likewise to take Notice in particular, that it is evident from his Observations on those facetious Treatises, that if he had thought fit to have applied himself further to Performances of the witty Kind, he was as well qualified for them by his fine Parts, as for more solid Studies. But as this short Sally on a witty Subject was very excusable in the first Part of his Life, so the peculiar Learning shewn in his Annotations on those Pieces of Pleasantry is really valuable. However, as this wants no Apology, so he soon diverted the Course of his Studies to Matters of a more useful Nature, and more beneficial to the World.

2. In a short Time after, Mr *Gibson*, then B. A. translated into *Latin* the *Chronicon Saxonicum*, and published it, together with the *Saxon* Original and his own learned Notes on the whole, at *Oxford* in 1692, in 4*to*. This Work he attempted by the Advice of the late excellent Dr *Mill*, who himself was an exemplary Instance of learned Industry in his critical Labours on the *Greek* Testament, carried on in a Course of about thirty Years. This Treatise, published by Mr *Gibson*, is allowed by the Learned to be the best Remains extant of *Saxon* Antiquity. About that Time the *Saxon* Language was very much cultivated at *Oxford*, and more especially by several Gentlemen of *Queen's-College*, in which Foundation Mr *Gibson* had his Education. And accordingly as he arrived at great Skill in the *Saxon* Tongue, probably under the Directions of Dr *Hickes*, the great Promoter of *Northern* Literature, he properly prepared himself for more exact Researches into the Antiquities of his own Country, to the

Pursuit

Purſuit of which Study he had a natural Inclination, and applied himſelf for ſome Years with the greateſt Diligence; as appears by the Books publiſhed ſoon afterwards by him, which ſhall now be conſidered in their Order of Time.

3. In the ſame Year appeared in the World a Treatiſe intituled, *Librorum Manuſcriptorum in duabus inſignibus Bibliothecis; altera* Teniſoniana, Londini; *altera* Dugdaliana, Oxonii; *Catalogus. Edidit* E. G. *i. e.* Edmundus Gibſon, Oxonii 1692, 4*to.* The former Part of this Catalogue, conſiſting of ſome Share of the learned Sir *James Ware*'s MS. Collection, was dedicated to Dr *Thomas Teniſon*, then Biſhop of *Lincoln*, as at that Time placed in his Library. And it appears from the Dedication, that Mr *Gibſon*'s *voluntary* Trouble in compiling and publiſhing that Catalogue of MSS. was the firſt Step he took to be introduced into the Knowledge of that learned Prelate; which was ſo fortunate as to lay the Foundation of his being, after ſome Years and further Services, admitted into his Family when he was Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, and of gradually acquiring the Eſteem and Patronage of that venerable Perſon. So early did he procure the Acquaintance of ſo able a Judge of the diſtinguiſhing Talents of Men, and of ſo ample a Rewarder of Merit, by an Accident ſo lucky as, in Concurrence with a Series of other learned Performances and ſubſequent Recommendations, contributed to Mr *Gibſon*'s obtaining the Arch-Biſhop's Favour, and prepared the Way for his ſucceſſive Preferments, and indeed for the Happineſs of his whole Life.

4. In the very next Year, *viz.* 1693, Mr *Gibſon*, then B. A. publiſhed, as tranſlated by him into *Latin*, a Treatiſe intituled, *Julii Cæſaris Portus Iccius illuſtratus*, conſiſting of a Tract of Mr *William Somner*, from his own MS. in Anſwer to *Chifflet*'s Book on that Subject, and likewiſe to the famous *Du Freſne*'s Diſſertation on the ſame, together with a new Diſſertation of his own, in which Mr *Gibſon* confutes both the Opinions of thoſe learned Perſons, and eſtabliſhes his Own to a very high Degree of Probability. This Treatiſe indeed, in 8*vo*, was licenſed in the Year 1693, but not publiſhed till the Beginning

ginning of the following Year; a little before the Publication of which were communicated to the World Mr *Gibſon*'s learned Notes on a Treatiſe, nearly allied to the other, of the ſame great Antiquary, Mr *Somner*, intituled, *A Treatiſe of the* Roman *Ports and Forts in Kent*, publiſhed by Mr *James Brome*; to which Treatiſe the Life of Mr *Somner* was prefixed, by Mr *Gibſon*'s good Friend Mr *White Kennet*, then of *Edmund-Hall* in *Oxford*, afterwards Lord Biſhop of *Peterborough*, an eminent Cultivater of *Engliſh* Antiquities.

5. But though Mr *Gibſon* was early engaged in the Study of the Antiquities of his native Country, yet the Cultivation of the *Roman* Authors was by no means neglected by him. For we find that in the very ſame Year, *viz.* 1693, he obliged the World with a beautiful Edition of the great Maſter of the Rules of Oratory, *Quintilian de Arte Oratoriâ*, in *4to*, with Emendations from ſeveral MSS. and the earlieſt Editions of that admired Work. It is very ſurprizing indeed, how Mr *Gibſon*, with all his Diligence, could engage in, and finiſh, the ſeveral Books now mentioned, and thoſe on Subjects ſo different, within the narrow Compaſs of a Year or two. But nothing was too difficult for his ſtudious Ardor, and uncommon Induſtry in the Promotion of Learning. But by this laſt Inſtance of *Quintilian* it appears, that if Mr *Gibſon* had thought fit to proſecute further the Study of Criticiſm on other antient *Roman* Writers, he was as well qualified for that Taſk as Others that have made the greateſt Figure on the like Occaſions, and have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the moſt valuable Editions of the old *Roman* Authors. However Mr *Gibſon* ſoon left that Taſk to other Editors, and returned, after this Specimen given of that Sort of Criticiſm, to the Gratification of his own Genius, and the Improvement of the learned World, by his further Application to the Study of the Antiquities of his own Country.

6. He accordingly choſe, with great Judgment, the beſt Account extant of our own united Kingdom, namely, *Camden*'s *Britannia*, that has been ſo much celebrated by the World as to ſuperſede the Neceſſity of enlarging in it's Commendation. This Work had been

before

before tranſlated out of *Latin* into *Engliſh* by Dr *Holland*, but with ſo many Inaccuracies and Interpolations, that it was thought proper to have it anew tranſlated into *Engliſh*, for the more particular Uſe of *Engliſhmen*. This Taſk Mr *Gibſon* undertook, and the whole was tranſlated by himſelf, and thoſe of his Friends whoſe Shares he reviſed; and, with the Life of the Author wrote by himſelf, he publiſhed the whole, with large Additions and Improvements, dedicated to the Great Lord *Sommers*, who favoured the Deſign, *London* 1695, *Fol.* However, this valuable Work was gradually rendered more perfect by Mr *Gibſon*, by the many additional Obſervations, which he either made himſelf, or received from his learned Correſpondents, in an Interval of twenty-ſeven Years; and therefore in it we have the Benefit of his maturer Sentiments and further Improvements, occaſionally made during all that Space of Time. All which he communicated to the Publick, in two Volumes *Folio*, *London* 1722. This latter Edition muſt needs have coſt him a great deal of Trouble, in carrying on ſo long a Correſpondence with many learned Men, and then in digeſting their ſeveral Anſwers to him, and inſerting what was moſt valuable in them in the proper Places of his Work. But nothing was too difficult to be proſecuted by a Perſon of his great Induſtry, even whilſt he was engaged in ſeveral other important Subjects.

7. The next learned Labour, that I can diſcover of Mr *Gibſon*, is, his *Vita* Thomæ Bodleii *Equitis Aurati*, together with his *Hiſtoria Bibliothecæ Bodleianæ*, that are prefixed to a large Volume, intituled, *Catalogi Librorum Manuſcriptorum in* Angliâ *et* Hiberniâ *in unum Collecti*; Oxonii 1697, in 2 Tom. *Fol.* This Life of Sir *Thomas Bodley*, the Founder of the Publick Library at *Oxford*, together with the Hiſtory of that Library, were thought fit to be wrote in Honour of, and in Gratitude to, ſo munificent a Patron of Learning, and the principal Benefactors to that incomparable Repoſitory of all Arts and Sciences. And, in compiling both the Life and Hiſtory, Mr *Gibſon* was much aſſiſted by Sir *Thomas Bodley*'s own Papers and Letters now

extant in his Library, as well as by Mr *Anthony Wood*'s *Antiquitates Oxonienſes*, and other Collections of that laborious Antiquary.

8. Soon after the Publication of thoſe Treatiſes, Mr *Gibſon* was engaged in making a Collection, intituled, *Reliquiæ Spelmannianæ, being the poſthumous Works of Sir* Henry Spelman, *relating to the Laws and Antiquities of* England, publiſhed by our Editor, together with his own Life of the Author, at *Oxford* in 1698, *Fol.* The Performances of that great Antiquary on the *Britiſh Councils*, and his *Gloſſary*, or rather his *Collection of* Engliſh *Antiquities*, have been ſo much celebrated in the learned World, that it was rightly judged by Mr *Gibſon*, that the Remains of ſo eminent a Perſon which had not yet ſeen the Light were very valuable, and well deſerved to be communicated to the World, as they actually were tranſcribed by him from the *Bodleian* MSS. Theſe Remains of ſo learned a Man were dedicated by him to the Great and Good Arch-Biſhop *Teniſon*, whoſe Patronage and Encouragement Mr *Gibſon* very gratefully acknowledged in his Dedication. And probably about this Time, or ſoon after, Mr *Gibſon* was taken into the Arch-Biſhop's Family, as a domeſtick Chaplain. The Favour of his Grace, which he ſo worthily acquired by his learned Labours and ſuperiour Abilities, was ever afterwards retained, with new additional Obligations laid upon him for the ſeveral Preferments in the Church, which were gradually conferred upon him with a liberal Hand.

9. His next Treatiſe was intituled, *Synodus Anglicana: or, the Conſtitution and Proceedings of an* Engliſh *Convocation, ſhewn, from the Acts and Regiſters thereof, to be agreeable to the Principles of an Epiſcopal Church. With an Appendix of three Regiſters of the Upper-Houſe, and two entire Journals of the Lower-Houſe*, publiſhed *London*, 1702. This Work conſiſts of all the antient Forms that are eſſential to the Conſtitution of an *Engliſh* Convocation. The Neceſſity of the Publication of which Collection is ſo well known to the preſent Age to have been occaſioned by the Miſrepreſentations of the Rights of Convocation made by a Writer of too much Art, as well as too warm and uneaſy a Temper, on ſome ſiniſter Views of leſſening, if not quite

ſinking,

ſinking, the Rights of the Arch-Biſhop, as Preſident of Convocation, attended likewiſe with ſome Diſputes about ſome Rights claimed by the Lower-Houſe of Covocation, in Oppoſition to the antient and known Rights of the Upper-Houſe, or the Preſident and Biſhops; this Controverſy, I ſay, is ſo recent, as to render ſuperfluous any further Account of it. And indeed the *Synodus Anglicana* has ſet the Archiepiſcopal Rights in ſo clear a Light, as well as thoſe of the reſt of the Upper-Houſe, in the conteſted Points of Privilege; which are ſo well adjuſted with the Privileges of the Lower-Houſe, in that Collection of Inſtruments, by antient Practice; that no more Obſervations need here be made upon the great Uſefulneſs of that elaborate Treatiſe, with regard to Compoſing all Differences of Opinion about the Rights and Forms of Convocation, excepting this ſingle Reflection, that how trifling ſoever a Controverſy that may have been thought by ſome Perſons, which was chiefly carried on by the Members of both Houſes among themſelves, about the Forms and Extent of their reſpective Powers; yet the good Order and Regularity of a due Subordination of the eſſential Parts of Convocation, which is ſo conſiderable a Branch of our Conſtitution, is a Thing of ſuch Importance as to be worth contending for; as likewiſe is the Peace and Tranquillity of the Publick, which was in ſome meaſure affected by the Heats and Animoſities that were raiſed on that unhappy Occaſion. I ſhall here add, that, among the many anonymous Pamphlets publiſhed on that Subject, the following were (as I am credibly informed) wrote by Dr *Gibſon*, viz.

A Letter to a Friend in the Country, concerning the Proceedings in Convocation in the Years 1700 and 1701.

The Right of the Arch-Biſhop to continue or prorogue the whole Convocation. *London* 1701, 4*to*.

A Summary of the Arguments in Favour of the ſaid Right.

A Parallel between a *Preſbyterian* Aſſembly and the new Model of an *Engliſh* Provincial Synod. *London* 1702, 4*to*.

Reflections

Reflections upon a Paper, intituled, *The Expedient propoſed. London* 1702, 4*to.*

The Schedule of Prorogation reviewed. *London* 1702, 4*to.*

The pretended Independence of the Lower-Houſe upon the Upper-Houſe, a groundleſs Notion. *London* 1703, 4*to.*

A ſhort State of ſome preſent Queſtions in Convocation. *London* 1700, 4*to.*

The Marks of a defenceleſs Cauſe, in the Proceedings and Writings of the Lower-Houſe of Convocation. *London* 1703, 4*to.*

An Account of the Proceedings in Convocation, in a Cauſe of Contumacy, upon the Prolocutor's going into the Country without the Leave of the Arch-Biſhop, commenced *April* 10, 1707.

10. The next Treatiſes of Dr *Gibſon*, in Order of Time as to their Compoſition, though not as to that of their Publication, were his ſeveral *Charges* to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of *Surrey*, intituled, *Viſitations parochial and general.* For, having with great Pleaſure obſerved the Benefit attending his *parochial* Viſitation through the Archdeaconry of *Surrey*, He ſtrongly recommended the Practice of it to other Archdeacons. To thoſe, is added his Sermon *De Excommunicatione* before the Convocation in 1714-15, together with ſome other Tracts relating to the Government and Diſcipline of the Church of *England*; publiſhed at *London* in 1717, in 8*vo*, when the Author was advanced to the Biſhoprick of *Lincoln*. Among thoſe Tracts are Reaſons given for ſeparating the Commiſſions of Official-Principal and Vicar-General, now jointly granted to Chancellors; but propoſed to be hereafter granted, according to the original Deſign of each Office; the firſt to Civilians for Cauſes of a Civil and Temporal Nature, the ſecond to Clergymen for the Adminiſtration of Matters merely Spiritual or Eccleſiaſtical, under the Biſhop of the Dioceſe. Some Account likewiſe is given, in this Collection, of the Progreſs made in Convocation towards the Appropriating of *Excommunication* to Matters merely Spiritual and Eccleſiaſtical. This Diſtinction of Offices was no doubt deſigned by the Author as a proper Means to retrieve the antient

Honour

Honour and Reverence of the Sentence of *Excommunication*, which he thought had been too much proſtituted by an Application of it to ſome Temporal or mixt matters, and ſometimes to things not of the greateſt Importance. But whether this Diſtinction of thoſe Officers in the Church be practicable or not in the preſent State of things among us, I ſhall not pretend to determine; but ſhall only add, that the Deſign of diſtinguiſhing thoſe ſeveral Powers, and recovering the primitive Regard due to the Sentence of *Excommunication*, was entirely well-meant, and his Scheme was good and laudable in itſelf, tho' perhaps incapable of being executed in the preſent Age. However, I cannot omit obſerving that ſome of theſe Treatiſes, though compoſed before, ſeem to have been publiſhed in 1717, as a Sort of *Supplement* to the Great Work of his *Codex*, which was publiſhed a few Years before, namely, in 1713; the latter of which ſhall be conſidered under the next Article of this Account.

11. And on this Subject I cannot but premiſe a few Things relating to the *Scheme* of the *Codex*, as well as the Occaſion of it. The Title of it beſt expreſſes how extenſive a Scheme Dr *Gibſon* had formed of that Work; it runs thus, *Codex Juris Eccleſiaſtici* Anglicani: *Or, the Statutes, Conſtitutions, Canons, Rubricks, and Articles, of the Church of* England, *methodically digeſted under their proper Heads; with a Commentary, hiſtorical and juridical; and with an introductory Diſcourſe concerning the preſent State of the Power, Diſcipline, and Laws, of the Church of* England; *likewiſe with an Appendix of Inſtruments antient and modern, by* Edmund Gibſon, *D.D. Archdeacon of* Surrey, *Rector of* Lambeth, *and Chaplain to his Grace the Lord Arch-Biſhop of* Canterbury. London 1713, *in large* Folio, *or rather in two Volumes* Folio.

With regard to the comprehenſive *Scheme* of the *Codex*, it was no doubt formed, and carried on, by the particular Encouragement, and deſerved Patronage, of Arch-Biſhop *Teniſon*, in whoſe Family the Author long reſided, and whoſe Intimations and Directions for the Improvement of it he received from Time to Time, as he enjoyed

the conſtant Favour of the Arch-Biſhop for many Years, both in his Family, and out of it in his Neighbourhood, as Miniſter of *Lambeth*, in which latter Capacity he finiſhed it. The Author likewiſe had the occaſional Advices of ſome of the moſt eminent Common Lawyers and Civilians then living, in Caſes of the greateſt Difficulty, that might well occur to a Perſon who was not bred up in the Profeſſion of the Law, what Progreſs ſoever he had made himſelf in that Faculty by his uncommon Induſtry. And indeed this learned Labour, begun and carried on out of a juſt Zeal for the Service of the Church and Clergy, coſt him the Thoughts and Pains of many Years, in the beſt and moſt vigorous Part of his Life; a Labour of ſo great a Variety of Subjects, and of ſo extenſive a Compaſs, that none but a Perſon of his firm Reſolution, as well as great Abilities, could have conquered the Difficulties attending it, and finiſhed it with an undaunted Perſeverance in doing Good to the World, and more eſpecially for the Benefit of the Clergy.

As to the immediate *Occaſion* of the Author's Attempt to draw up a comprehenſive Scheme of the legal Duties and Rights of the Clergy, it was plainly this; that the Knowledge of them lay in great Confuſion, and no good Syſtem had been actually made before for the Uſe of the Clergy. Some Schemes indeed had been formed, but they were very defective; ſuch as thoſe of *Mocket* and *Coſins*. For the former of thoſe is too general, ſhort, and ſuperficial, in his *Politia Eccleſiæ* Anglicanæ; and the latter is too jejune and dry, and eſpecially as drawn up in his later *Tables*; and neither of them is ſupported by proper Authorities. To omit here ſome other imperfect Accounts of our Eccleſiaſtical Law, the beſt Book, next to the *Codex*, that we even now have, is *Dr* Watſon's *Clergyman's Law*. But beſides the Deficiencies of that Work, as to Rules of Law and a proper Commentary, there is a great Defect ſpread throughout the whole, as to the Manner of his Citation of *Acts* of Parliament; namely, the Want of the expreſs Words of the Statutes themſelves at large, to enable every competent Reader, among the Clergy, to form a right Judgment of particular Caſes determi-

minable by the true Senſe of thoſe Statutes. And indeed a compleat Sett of the Statutes at large does not fall to the Share of many of the inferiour Clergy, in order to conſult and interpret them themſelves, either as to their legal Duties or Rights. It might well have been expected that a Work of that Nature ſhould have been perfected by profeſſed Lawyers; but it has been obſerved, that the moſt eminent Perſons in that Faculty have generally been leſs converſant in the *Eccleſiaſtical* Law, than in the other Parts of the *Engliſh* Law; and that the moſt diſtinguiſhed Authors among the Common Lawyers have in Fact been leſs accurate and diligent in treating of the *Clergy-Law*, than in the more lucrative Parts of the Common Law, and eſpecially as the former is intermixt with the Canon-Law, which is confeſſedly out of their proper Province.

In order then to remedy the Defects of former Performances on this Subject, our Author ſet about this great Work; and here it is obvious at the very firſt View, how laborious a Taſk he preſcribed himſelf; ſince he was obliged by his Scheme not only to peruſe all the *Acts* of Parliament extant, but to examine with Accuracy all the voluminous *Reports* of the Common Law, as well as the moſt antient Law-Books, original Hiſtories, and authentick Inſtruments, in order to extract from them all that related to his large Scheme of the legal and acknowledged Rights of the Clergy. With this View he found frequent Occaſion to inſert in his Work ſeveral entire Statutes, (for printing which at large he was obliged to buy his Peace of the then Law-Patentee), and ſometimes large Portions of ſome of them, and at other times to ſelect only ſome particular Clauſes and Paragraphs of them of an *Eccleſiaſtical* Nature, which often occur in *Acts* intermixt with ſecular Matters, where one would leaſt expect to find them. All theſe were either to be tranſcribed or extracted, with the Opinions of the beſt Lawyers upon them if they were to be found, and inſerted properly in his Work.

But this Scheme comprehended likewiſe the antient Canon-Law, as far as it had been received in *England*, and is conſiſtent with the Laws

of

of the Land; as being ſtill in Force by the 25th *Hen.* VIII. Here not only the Canon Law itſelf, but the allowed Practice of it in *England*, were neceſſarily to be ſtudied with Care, and particularly *Lyndwood*, the beſt *Engliſh* Canoniſt, to be digeſted; and proper Extracts of them to be made, which were of the greateſt Uſe in forming our Author's *Commentary* on his Work. For the better Knowledge of the *Practice* of the Canon Law, as conſiſtent with the Laws of the Land, another great Taſk was neceſſary to be performed by our moſt diligent Author. He accordingly peruſed all the Records or Regiſters extant of the Arch-Biſhops of *Canterbury*; which, on Account of Metropolitical Buſineſs, as well as Dioceſan, he judged equal to the Records of all the other Sees in *England*; in order to make proper Extracts from them, which are occaſionally inſerted throughout the whole *Codex*.

I need here only mention, with regard to the *Civil* Law, that there was leſs Occaſion for our Author's Uſe or Citations of it, excepting as it was intermixt with the Old Canon Law here received before the Reformation, and as the Canon Law itſelf might be illuſtrated and confirmed by the Reaſons uſed in the Civil Law. For otherwiſe we have much leſs Concern with the Civil Law here in *England ſince* the Reformation, than any of the Nations round about us.

From all theſe Materials, reduced with incredible Pains and Trouble into the large Body of his Eccleſiaſtical Law, our Author propoſed (God willing) to draw up an Eccleſiaſtical *Inſtitute*, chiefly for the Benefit of the poorer Clergy, in Imitation of *Juſtinian*'s Inſtitute as drawn from the vaſt *Digeſts* of the Civil Law. But though this Sort of Inſtitute was never carried on by himſelf, as he was unavoidably diverted from it by a great Variety of Buſineſs and other Studies, yet ſo good an *Abridgment* of the *Codex* has been made by a learned Perſon, and reviewed and improved by a very ſkilful Hand, as to ſuperſede the Neceſſity of the propoſed *Inſtitute*, by reducing the Subſtance of the larger Work into a narrow Compaſs, and to a cheaper Price, in 8*vo*; which though peculiarly ſuited to the Exigencies of the poorer Clergy, yet is indeed ſerviceable to Others who are enabled by a more plentiful Income,

Income, upon the Hints given in the Abridgment, to conſult the Original itſelf for further Explanation, and the Uſe of the Authorities collected in it for the Determination of particular Caſes, and for further Satisfaction in ſome Difficulties that may occur. And therefore it well deſerves our Obſervation, that the *fourth Edition* of that Abridgment is further improved by a much more exact Reference to the ſeveral Pages of the *Codex*, than the *Index* of the *Codex* itſelf affords.

But as new Views frequently ariſe in the Minds of thoughtful and learned Perſons in different Parts of their Lives, ſo that general Idea of an Eccleſiaſtical Common Law, that had long lain in the Mind of our Author, and which perhaps he thought was not ſufficiently ſpecified before in his *Codex*, prevailed ſo far with him, as to engage him in a new Purſuit of the Study of the Eccleſiaſtical Common Law that had been received here before the Reformation, and is conſiſtent with the Laws of the Land. And indeed that there is ſuch a Law in being, as the antient Eccleſiaſtical Common-Law, under the forementioned Limitations, is as evident as that there is a Temporal or Secular Common Law, as they are equally founded on the ſame Foot of Practice, Uſage, and Cuſtom, concurrently with the Statute-Law of the Land, and conſiſtently with the Law of God. Our Author aſſures us he learned much of this Kind, in Point of Practice, from the Regiſters of *Canterbury*, even previouſly to the Reformation (as has been intimated); but ſince thoſe Reſearches did not give him a full and entire Satisfaction, he reſumed his former Vigour, even whilſt he was in the Decline of Life, and purſued for ſeveral Years, with an uncommon Reſolution, his accurate Examination of all the Records and Regiſters now extant in the ſeveral Cathedrals of *England* and *Wales*; which were tranſmitted to him by the Permiſſion and Order of their ſeveral Biſhops, and were after his due Uſe of them returned ſafe to their reſpective Archives. He accordingly made large Collections of the antient Canon Law, limited as above, out of them, and digeſted them under proper Heads. This was a Work of prodigious Labour, as well as what required great Judgment and Skill. He did not indeed think

fit to publiſh it himſelf at ſo advanced an Age, and much leſs to defend it, if drawn out into Controverſy; as it might poſſibly happen, if any Part of it ſhould be found diſagreeable to what he apprehended to be a Novel Doctrine, namely, that the Canon Law does not oblige the Laity among us. I ſhall not here preſume to interpoſe my own Opinion, whatever it may be, on ſo invidious a Queſtion, as that of the Extent of the Canon Law here in *England*; but I willingly leave the Deciſion of the Caſe to the impartial World, from the various Inſtances of the Extent of that Law to the Laity, which occurred to the Biſhop of *London* in the forementioned Extracts of all our Cathedral-Archives, whenever they ſhall be communicated to the Publick.

But however that be, it may juſtly be expected, that when Party-Prejudices and Perſonal Animoſities, that may have been entertained by ſome Perſons againſt the Author of the *Codex*, or that Work itſelf, ſhall ceaſe, the real Value of both will be acknowledged by all; and more eſpecially, when the ſeveral Improvements that have been made by the Author in a Courſe of ſo many Years from the Time of the Publication of that great Work, ſhall, by ſome favourable Opportunity, be communicated to the World, together with the forementioned *Extracts*. And indeed it cannot be doubted that this Work itſelf, and more eſpecially when ſo compleated, will be conſidered by grateful Poſterity as the beſt and moſt uſeful Body of our Eccleſiaſtical Law, that is, of the legal Rights and Duties of the *Engliſh* Clergy; at leaſt till ſome profeſſed Lawyer of the moſt eminent Character ſhall ariſe, that will oblige the World with a more perfect Body of the Eccleſiaſtical Law that is now in Force among us.

I have dwelt the longer on the Subject of the late Biſhop of *London*'s *Codex*, as that celebrated Work, with it's Concomitants and Conſequences, took up a very conſiderable Part of it's Author's Life, and that too, in the matureſt Years of it: So that if he had performed nothing elſe, he might be juſtly ſaid to have ſpent the beſt of his Days in the Service of the Church and Clergy. But as he had the trueſt Zeal for the

the Benefit of both, ſo he gave other ſignal Inſtances of his Affection for them from Time to Time. One of which was,

12. The Collection made by him of the principal Treatiſes againſt *Popery*, and in Vindication of the Reformed Church of *England*, that were wrote in the laſt great Struggle with *Popery*, in the Reign of King *James* the Second. It is well known that in that critical Juncture the Clergy, and eſpecially thoſe of *London*, moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their repeated Triumphs over the *Popiſh* Prieſts and Emiſſaries; for making which, as they were ſo throughly prepared in the preceding Reign, on Occaſion of the dreadful Proſpect of a *Popiſh* Succeſſor, by laying in a proper Fund of that Sort of Learning; ſo their excellent Performances being grown very ſcarce and dear, and the Biſhop of *London* juſtly reflecting that we are ſtill engaged in a Struggle with *Popery*, he thought it proper to reprint the moſt diſtinguiſhed Treatiſes for Our Reformed Religion that were then wrote by the moſt eminent Hands; which when ſelected from more Perſonal Controverſy, which is too often intermixt in Diſputes of that Kind, and likewiſe digeſted under proper Heads and Titles, together with ſome ſeaſonable Prefaces of his own, he publiſhed in 3 Vols. in *Fol.* in 1738, *&c.* for the perpetual Benefit of the Church and Clergy; and more eſpecially of the latter of thoſe of ſo narrow an Income, as to render them incapable of collecting, or of purchaſing when well-collected, the Original Editions of thoſe Controverſial Treatiſes. By this Republication, and that too with ſo much Judgment, the Editor has recommended effectually an invaluable Treaſure to the preſent Age and Poſterity, as well as at the ſame Time has refreſhed and adorned that eternal Monument of the entire Defeat of *Popery*, even when it was armed with Power to enforce it; and that too beyond any thing that is to be found elſewhere in one Body of that Controverſy, both with regard to the Vindication of the Eſtabliſhed Church, and the expoſing the dangerous Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*.

13. As to the Biſhop of *London*'s *Paſtoral Letters*, directed both to the Clergy and Laity, in Oppoſition to Infidelity and Enthuſiaſm,

and

and eſpecially as the latter has been lately revived by the *Methodiſts*; I cannot but obſerve in paſſing, that as he ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the former, ſo he exerted a juſt Zeal againſt the latter Sect, as they have endeavoured to turn Chriſtianity itſelf into a Sort of Enthuſiaſm in it's Operations on the Minds of Men, as they have broke through the eſtabliſhed Rules and Orders of the Church, and ſhook off all legal Reſtraints and Canonical Obligations of the Epiſcopal Government; ſince he juſtly apprehended, that their mixt State of Non-Conformity and pretended Conformity in ſome reſpects, may, in its Conſequences, become more fatal to the Eſtabliſhed Church, than the open Separation of the other Sects of Diſſenters from it. And as to his Viſitation-*Charges* to his Clergy, and eſpecially the two laſt moſt inſtructive Performances of that Kind that he publiſhed together in one Volume, as well as his occaſional *Sermons*, ſome leſſer Pieces of a *mixt* Nature, and ſome ſmall *practical* Tracts againſt the prevailing Immoralities of the Age; (in the repeated Editions of which laſt he took more Satisfaction, in his Decline of Life, than in his larger Volumes of a Diſciplinarian and more Controverſial Nature) theſe, I ſay, I ſhall not here minutely ſpecify, as being ſo well known as to be in all Men's Hands among us that have retained any ſerious Senſe of Religion; which indeed are ſuited to all Ranks of Men, not only by the Excellency of them, but by the Cheapneſs of their Prices, and eſpecially when diſtributed among the Poor and Ignorant, by the Beneficence of well-diſpoſed and charitable Perſons throughout the Nation.

2*dly*, Having given ſome Account of Biſhop *Gibſon*'s learned and pious Works, I ſhall now add a few Obſervations on the more Active and practical Part of his Life. And indeed this Tranſition from the one to the other is very natural. For it is well known that he had a very particular Genius for the right Management of Buſineſs, which he happily tranſacted by means of a moſt exact *Method* that he uſed on all Occaſions. This is a Talent that rarely falls to the Share of Men of great Learning, who are generally better ſuited to matters of a Speculative than of a Practical nature. And this he purſued with great

Advantage,

Advantage, not only in the Affairs of his own Dioceſe, which he governed with the moſt exact Regularity, but of a vaſtly larger Diſtrict, namely, in his great *Care* in promoting the Spiritual Affairs of *all* the Church-of-*England* Colonies in the *Weſt-Indies*.

And indeed the Miniſtry in the laſt Reign were ſo ſenſible of his great Abilities in tranſacting Buſineſs, that there was committed to him a Sort of *Eccleſiaſtical* Miniſtry for ſeveral Years, and more eſpecially on Occaſion of the long Decline of Health of Body, and of Vigour of Mind, of Arch-Biſhop *Wake*; when almoſt every thing that concerned the Church was in great meaſure left to the Care of the Biſhop of *London*.

Many Inſtances might be here aſſigned of his making a proper Uſe of that *Spiritual* Miniſtry he was honoured with. But I ſhall now only ſpecify ſome few of a more eminent Kind. One was his occaſional Recommendation of ſeveral worthy and learned Perſons to the Favour of the ſecular Miniſtry for Preferments ſuited to their Merits, as he had frequently the Diſpoſal of the higheſt Dignities in the Church.

Another Inſtance that deſerves to be recollected, was the employing his Intereſt with Perſons of the higheſt Rank and Quality, in procuring an ample Endowment from the Crown for the regular Performance of Divine Service in the *Royal Chapel* at *Whitehall*, and more particularly for the Maintenance of a competent Number of Miniſters there, in their ſeveral Turns of Preaching to a large Congregation of Perſons that otherwiſe were not generally provided for in Divine Matters; by a Succeſſion of Miniſters, I ſay, ſelected out of both our Univerſities, with proper Salaries for thoſe diſtinguiſhed Clergymen; who thereby were enabled to do much Good to Others, as well as to recommend themſelves by their Probational Exerciſes there to higher Preferments, and by this Advantage of the publick Specimens given of their Abilities to the World, to entitle them to the Favour of ſome worthy Patrons, if not of the Crown itſelf.

Again, another Service of the Biſhop of *London* to the Church of *England* ought not to be here omitted; namely, his conſtant guarding againſt the repeated Attempts of ſome Perſons to procure a Repeal of the Corporation and Teſt-Acts. By baffling the Attacks made on thoſe Fences of the Church of *England*, he wiſely thought he ſecured the whole Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution. For it was his fixed Opinion that it would be an unjuſtifiable piece of Preſumption to arm thoſe Hands with Power, that might poſſibly employ it, as was fatally done in the Days of our Forefathers, againſt our Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution itſelf. He was entirely perſwaded that there ought always to be a legal Eſtabliſhment of the Church, to a Conformity with which ſome peculiar Advantages might reaſonably be annexed; and at the ſame time, with great Moderation and Temper, he approved of a *Toleration* of *Proteſtant* Diſſenters; and eſpecially when they keep within the juſt Limits of Conſcience, and attempt nothing that is highly prejudicial to, or deſtructive of, the Rights of the Eſtabliſhment in the Church, in Competition with thoſe that Conform to it's Rules, and adhere to the real Intereſts of it. But he was as hearty an Enemy to Perſecution in matters of Religion, as thoſe that have moſt popularly Declaimed againſt it.

And on this Occaſion one more Service of the Church and Clergy, done by the Biſhop of *London*, well claims their grateful Acknowledgments, namely, his diſtinguiſhed Zeal (after he had animated his Brethren on the Bench to concur with him) in timely Apprizing the Clergy of the bold Schemes that were formed by a very Enthuſiaſtical, but a very Artful, Sect among us (under the Appearance of an uncommon Simplicity), in order to deprive the Clergy of their legal Maintenance by *Tythes*; and in Adviſing them to obviate ſo great a Blow to Religion, as well as ſuch groſs Injuſtice to themſelves, by their early Application to the Legiſlature to preſerve them in the Poſſeſſion of their known Rights and Properties. But though the Deſigns of their Adverſaries were happily defeated, yet it ought ever to be remember'd, in Honour to the Memory of the Biſhop of *London*, that ſuch Umbrage

brage was taken by the then Great Miniſter, on Occaſion of the Advice given by him and his Brethren to the Clergy in that Critical Juncture, as in fact ſoon terminated in the viſible Diminution, if not the entire Sinking, of the ſuperiour Intereſt and Authority of the Biſhop of *London*.

And as he was a faithful Friend to the Eſtabliſhed Church, ſo was he to the Eſtabliſhed Government, and promoted its Intereſts on all proper Occaſions; as being fully perſwaded that the Connexion between them is ſo ſtrict and firm, that they muſt ſtand or fall together; as likewiſe, that all other Pretenſions, how artfully ſoever diſguiſed, are abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Preſervation of our Conſtitution both in Church and State.

I muſt add to theſe Obſervations on his Conduct, that in the moſt difficult Caſes, and moſt dangerous Emergencies that have occurred in Church-matters, the Biſhop of *London*'s Opinion was uſually conſulted by the moſt learned Perſons in the Church, as well as by thoſe of the firſt Rank in the State; and in many Inſtances the Weight of his Authority, as well as the Force of his Reaſons, were generally ſubmitted to, as a Sort of Oracular Deciſions, with the greateſt Deference paid to his well-balanced Judgment, as well by his Equals in Station in the Church, as by his own inferiour Clergy; the former of whom as he treated with the moſt agreeable Familiarities of Friendſhip, ſo he ſupported the Dignity and Character of a Dioceſan among the latter, though ſoftened with much Condeſcenſion of Behaviour, and Goodneſs in giving ſuitable Directions, and even Aſſiſtance on all proper Occaſions, and eſpecially to the younger Part of his Clergy.

But as the good Biſhop was far advanced in Years, *he ſet his houſe in order*, and made very prudent Proviſions for the ſeveral Branches of his numerous Family. The beſt Proviſions, however, that he made for himſelf, were his ſincere Services of the Cauſe of Virtue and Religion, and particularly his *Works* of Charity, which undoubtedly *have followed him*, accompanied with the greateſt Satisfaction, into another World. And with how liberal a Hand his Charities were diſpenſed

on

on all proper Occaſions, and more eſpecially in the Capital of his Dioceſe, thoſe worthy Perſons that were entruſted with the Diſtribution of them can give the moſt ample Teſtimonials. But as for his more private Charities, which there is great reaſon to believe were very conſiderable, they are reſerved to the Cognizance of that God *who ſees in ſecret*, and will one Day *reward them openly*.

He was very ſenſible of the great Decays of Nature for ſome Time before his Death, in which he complained of a *Languor* that hung about him. As indeed, in the beſt and nobleſt Senſe of that Expreſſion, he had made free with his Conſtitution by incredible Induſtry in a long Courſe of Study and Buſineſs of various Kinds; he had well-nigh exhauſted his Spirits, and worn out a Conſtitution by his uninterrupted Labours, which was naturally ſo Vigorous that his Life might otherwiſe have probably been protracted to ſeveral more Years than ſeventy-nine; towards the End of which Year of his Age, namely, on the 6th of *September*, 1748 (after an Epiſcopate of near 33 Years), he departed out of this Life, with true *Chriſtian* Fortitude, an apparent Senſe of his approaching Diſſolution, and in perfect Tranquillity of Mind, during the Intervals of his laſt fatal Indiſpoſition at *Bath*, after a very ſhort Continuance there. But as the Loſs of ſo great and good a Man muſt be acknowledged to be a Publick one, and what highly affects both Church and State; ſo it admits of this *Chriſtian* Conſolation, that, after he had faithfully *ſerved his Generation*, he left the World with the Conſciouſneſs of a well-ſpent Life, and in the Primitive and Catholick Faith of *Chriſt*; and that without all doubt he is now very happy in the more immediate Preſence of a bountiful God, which is attended with Life, and Light, and Joy, for evermore.

May 13, 1749.

F I N I S.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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